



Connecticut Office of Tourism
FY23 STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

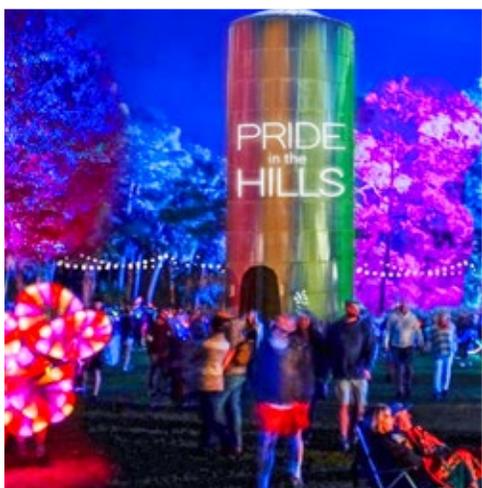
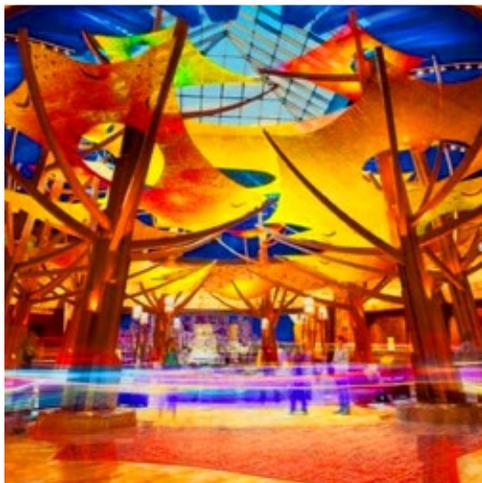


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Director	2
Vision and Mission Statements	4
Strategic Guides	5
Global Travel Industry Sales	9
Groups and Meetings	13
Sports Tourism	20
Cultural Tourism	22
LGBTQ+ Tourism	25
Multicultural Tourism	28
Heritage Tourism	31
Visitor Services and Regional Outreach	33
Concierge Services/Drive Market	36
Paid Advertising/Digital Marketing	39
PR/Social Media/Influencer Marketing	44
Content and Website	55
Analytics and Research	61
Memberships, Contracts and Financials	68
Tourism Industry Events and Summits: Executive Office	70

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Industry Partners and Stakeholders:

It has been a pleasure and delight to have spent the last few months touring our incredible state, meeting many of you. I continue to be amazed by the many tourism assets we have right here in Connecticut.

Tourism is back across the globe — and our industry is back in business. Industry teams and leaders are shaking hands and luring new opportunities. This is a phenomenal time for Connecticut to take center stage as a world-class, welcoming, vibrant and diverse destination.

As we embark on our FY 2023 this July, I am thrilled to be sharing this year's Tourism Strategic Plan which reflects a new and refreshed direction in concept, vision and mission.

While continuing to celebrate Connecticut's charming towns, beautiful scenery and rich history, we are excited to expand our efforts to include many new, dynamic and diverse offerings. Whether it be arts and culture-seeking, adrenaline-rushing, culinary thrills, betting your lucky number, or just simply "finding your vibe," Connecticut's energy and sense of adventure leaves you coming back for more.

I cannot tell you how thrilled I am to represent tourism for the State of Connecticut alongside our team and to be working with all of you to attract and grow visitation to the destination.

I look forward to collaborating with all of you to share with the world what makes this place so truly special!

All my best,

Noelle P. Stevenson
Director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism



VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS



VISION

Position Connecticut as a world-class destination that is vibrant, diverse and inclusive, inviting visitors to explore all of the state's tourism assets and experiences.

MISSION

Drive increased awareness of Connecticut as a tourist destination, stimulate growth for the state's varied tourism sector and maximize the resulting economic impact for all areas of the state.

STRATEGIC GUIDES

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Revamp the CTvisit website so that it showcases the vibrant and dynamic destination CT is today
- Increase awareness of CT as a tourism destination by maximizing our participation in key travel industry shows:
 - Leisure travel (global travel sales for national, international and drive markets)
 - Groups/meetings
 - Sports tourism
 - Cultural tourism
 - LGBTQ+ tourism
 - Multicultural/heritage tourism
- Continue to build strong partnerships with the regional tourism districts
- Ensure our advertising/digital marketing promotes the array of traditional and new offerings across the state
- Update our content and website on a regular basis
- Expand our PR, social media and influencer marketing initiatives
- Strengthen our collaboration with tourism industry partners — including our airports
- Expand our media pitches incorporating themed story angles and an annual high-profile media/influencer event to generate buzz about Connecticut tourism
- Leverage data from analytics and research to shape programs and guide decisions
- Optimize and increase our membership in tourism industry associations to support all our programs of work



RESEARCH INSIGHTS

No doubt, the tourism industry is still feeling the impact of COVID-19 in many ways. But we are also seeing major shifts in consumer attitudes about travel — many that we can capitalize on to spur travel to Connecticut. Here are six key research-driven insights that are shaping our FY23 strategic plan.

1. Hunger for new experiences

More than 80% of Americans now say they're eager to travel. But what's even more encouraging for Connecticut is that 54% say they want to visit places they have never been before.¹

2. Preference for domestic travel

While more people are considering international travel, 75% of American travelers say they are more interested in traveling within the United States than internationally in the next year.¹

3. Focus on sustainability

Both event planners and leisure travelers are showing an increased interest in eco-friendly travel. In fact, 54% say they're looking for ways to limit their impact on their environment when traveling.¹

4. Higher interest in visiting CT

Our latest Brand Awareness Study showed that interest in visiting CT is the highest it has been in seven years. Much of that interest was driven by positive reaction to our latest ad campaigns, which showed that people exposed to our advertising were 30 points more likely to visit CT in the next 12 months.²

5. Dramatic increase in diversity of CT visitors

Our Brand Awareness Study showed that recent visitors to CT were younger and more diverse. In fact, our percentage of Hispanic visitors nearly doubled — as did our percentage of travelers age 25 to 34.²

6. Popularity of digital nomadism

Nearly 22% of all American workers are likely to continue working remotely at least part of the time. Many of these remote workers are choosing to “wander while they work.” CT's broadband connectivity and growing short-term rentals position us well to capitalize on this growing trend.³

¹Update on American Travel Trends & Sentiment, February 2022, Destination Analysts. ²H2R Brand Awareness Study for Connecticut, 2022. ³Upwork study, February 2022.

TARGET AUDIENCES

DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING

Our visitors continue to be more ethnically diverse than ever — and increasingly representative of all age brackets.

- The average age of the visitor to CT is now 41. In fact, one-third of our visitors are now younger than 35.
- The average household income of our visitor still skews high — at \$133K.
- The average length of their stay increased slightly over the past year to three days.

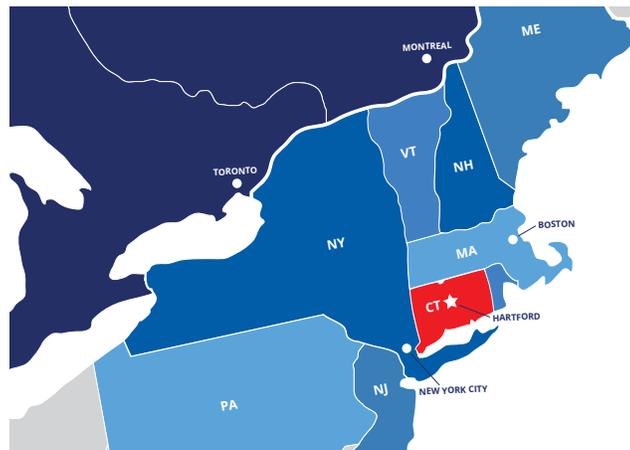
We will continue to focus on attracting a more balanced mix of visitors — for more frequent and extended stays.

GEOGRAPHIC TARGETING

We will also continue to deepen and broaden our geographic reach — regionally, nationally and internationally.

Primary drive markets

- Connecticut
- New York
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Vermont
- New Hampshire
- Maine



Key domestic fly markets

With more airlines now establishing more nonstop flights from both Bradley International Airport and Tweed New Haven Airport, we have an opportunity to test marketing to more fly markets. We will gauge the receptivity of these markets through both earned media outreach and targeted paid media pilot programs when/where possible.

- All 50 states (Inflight)
- Florida (variety of cities)
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Nashville, Tennessee
- Richmond/Norfolk, Virginia
- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- Akron/Columbus, Ohio
- Baltimore/Washington
- Raleigh/Durham
- Savannah, Georgia
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Target international markets

CT has historically attracted the largest number of visitors from the following international markets. As international travel increases — and more air routes are reestablished — we will refocus on attracting travelers from:

- Canada
- United Kingdom/Ireland
- Germany



GLOBAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY SALES

Connecticut Office of Tourism (COT) Leisure Sales provides travel industry professionals access to the resources they need for planning, marketing and selling the state as a leisure group and FIT destination.

The division oversees all targeted sales efforts to key domestic and international travel industry professionals, including tour operators, travel consultants, online travel agencies (OTAs), receptive service operators and international sales representatives.

The COT sales representative is responsible for developing sales missions, attending consumer and travel trade shows and organizing FAMiliarization tours to connect buyers with COT suppliers to foster business relationships and increase revenue for stakeholders and the State of CT.

During the pandemic recovery, a primary focus will be to introduce the COT as the leader in the leisure travel markets and engage the regional tourism districts as partners in the sales and marketing efforts of the COT.

Paramount in our recovery and the return of Aer Lingus Hartford air lift is the partnership with Discover New England, the official destination marketing organization charged with the promotion of the New England brand to distant domestic and international markets. The DNE partnership enables the COT sales representative to develop working relationships with the travel trade through our participation in the organization's sales and marketing initiatives.

The COT, in partnership with the regional tourism districts, will implement training sessions to educate stakeholders regarding the needs of the buyers and the visitors, which will increase supplier engagement, product for travel trade agencies/operators and ultimately visitation.

GOAL: DIRECT SALES

Increase the volume and revenue of leisure travel.

STRATEGY I

Establish relationships with the regional tourism district BOD and their stakeholders as a leader and resource in the leisure travel market to increase their participation in the leisure markets.

TACTICS

- Present workshops/training sessions for stakeholders to show value in the market as well as to share market research and best practice guidelines
- Engage stakeholders in the selection process of sales initiatives and targeted feeder markets
- Encourage participation of stakeholders in COT sales and marketing initiatives to increase their visibility in the market

STRATEGY 2

Increase awareness of Connecticut as a leisure destination to the drive, group tour and international market segments to increase visitation.

TACTICS

- Attend trade shows in partnership with Discover New England (DNE) to build the Connecticut brand within the region and develop relationships with tour operators/product managers
- Increase Connecticut's presence in key tour operator/agencies' marketing materials
- Provide travel industry professionals with easy access to the resources needed for planning, marketing and selling Connecticut
- Develop sales missions, attend consumer and travel trade shows and organize familiarization tours to connect clients with stakeholders and to increase awareness of Connecticut's tourism/hospitality product
- Build upon sales efforts to key domestic and international travel industry professionals, including tour operators, travel advisors, online travel agencies (OTAs) and international inbound operators to reach the consumer
- Expand travel advisor education through virtual training workshops
- Reestablish relationships with key Aer Lingus representatives and Bradley International Airport to support the return and successful operation of the Aer Lingus Dublin/Bradley flight



PROGRAM OF WORK: FY23

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2022

- **7/6:** TravMedia Annual Soiree & Travel Trade/ Training, Ireland
- **9/16:** Brand USA Travel Week/Germany
- **9/19:** Maryland Motorcoach Group Leader Showcase/Maryland
- **9/29:** New Jersey Annual Fall Meeting/ New Jersey

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2022

- **10/1:** PA Sales Mission, Pennsylvania
- **11/7:** World Travel Market, UK
- **11/12:** Travel Centres Training/Networking, Ireland
- **11/15:** VUSA Ireland Thanksgiving Event/ Training, Ireland

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2023

- **1/20:** New York Travel & Adventure Show/ New York
- **1/27:** Holiday World/Ireland
- **2/1 (TBD):** Aer Lingus Roadshow/Ireland
- **2/3:** American Bus Association Marketplace/ Michigan

MARCH-APRIL 2023

- **3/1:** Boston Travel & Adventure Show, Boston
- **3/3:** ITB/Germany
- **4/1:** DNE Summit/Maine
- **4/1:** DNE FAM Tour/Connecticut
- **4/1:** New York State Sales Mission/New York

MAY-JUNE 2023

- **5/1 (TBD):** Domestic Tour Operator FAM/ Connecticut
- **5/1 (TBD):** Tour & Travel Agency Sales Mission/ Training, UK

THROUGHOUT FY23

International Media & Travel Trade FAMs
(July 22-June 23, Connecticut)



GROUPS AND MEETINGS

As the state recovers from the impact of the pandemic, The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB) plans to rebuild the meetings and events industry and continue to sell and market the state of Connecticut as a premier destination for national, regional and statewide group business meetings, conventions and events.

GOAL ONE: DIRECT SALES

Drive more groups and meetings to Connecticut; maximize their impact on the state's economy.

STRATEGY I

Sell and market Connecticut as a premier destination for national, regional and statewide group business. In response to COVID-19, CTCSB will work to rebuild the meetings and events industry, deliver qualified RFPs to venues and suppliers and sell Connecticut as a safe, convenient and accessible destination.

TACTICS

- Gather and report on the impact of attendees at meetings/events (jobs supported, taxes generated, business sales impact)
- Report on the impact of the CTCSB's sales and marketing efforts
- Identify and share testimonials of businesses that benefit from group business
- Position the CTCSB as the state's experts in the meeting and event industry
- Develop a continually updated database with key CTCSB statistics for event planners, board members and supporters; invest in sales prospecting tools and resources

STRATEGY 2

Build and further develop relationships with local planners to help them host events in Connecticut. Approach all events affected by COVID-19 to incentivize them to rebook.

TACTICS

- Focus on local corporate planners to help them get back to the market. Launch marketing efforts to incentivize planners especially those in the corporate market
- Offer incentives, third-party promotions, direct support and upgraded concessions
- Offer attractive promotional pieces, giveaways and other items for events attendees
- Hire or contract additional staff or lead generators to rebuild the pipeline of events for the immediate and future year economies

STRATEGY 3

Build and further develop relationships with event planners.

TACTICS

- Develop and enhance online profiles for ConferenceDirect, HelmsBriscoe, CVENT and others
 - Budget for hosted FAM tours for planners and media
 - Increase CTCSB attendance at industry trade shows and meetings
 - Create an electronic, statewide facilities guide for conventions
 - Increase marketing with online partners
 - Develop a plan to attract new business and retain current business; consider investing in additional third-party partnerships and channels
-

STRATEGY 4

Develop partnerships with community-development focused agencies and organizations.

TACTICS

- Develop clear and unified messaging in conjunction with the Connecticut Office of Tourism, Regional Tourism Districts, the Connecticut Lodging Association and the Connecticut Restaurant Association
- Form partnerships with other agencies and organizations, chambers of commerce, industry associations, colleges and government entities
- Request reciprocal appearances at board meetings and events to create mutually beneficial relationships with industry partners
- Develop co-op and partnership marketing opportunities
- Develop a referral incentive program



GOAL TWO: TECHNOLOGY AND E-MARKETING

Increase client visibility and staff effectiveness to market the state of Connecticut as a premier destination for national, regional and statewide group business.

STRATEGY I

Invest in new technologies, including digital and media assets.

TACTICS

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of the CTCSB website and e-marketing plan; evaluate competitor sites
- Engage a technology partner experienced in destination marketing organizations to be CTCSB's trusted advisor
- Enhance social media visibility and request reciprocal links from partners
- Implement a brand refresh to simplify the CTCSB brand identity and to align more consistently with the Connecticut Office of Tourism
- Work with Simpleview to upgrade the extranet and conduct training webinars to ensure complete member involvement and understanding of the sales systems and updates
- Further update and add elements to the CTCSB website as a "meeting-planner-driven" experience for site selection and competitive convention service e-resources; e.g., meeting planner toolkit, media library, microsites
- Work with the Office of Tourism to maximize the CTCSB's visibility on CTvisit.com
- Invest in search engine optimization (SEO)
- Enhance e-marketing with geo-targeting and other technology opportunities
- Design new unified collateral material such as multi-use digital brochures
- Expand meeting-related image and video library
- Invest in virtual CT experiences including hybrid meeting capabilities

STRATEGY 2

Enhance outreach through public events, e-Marketing, social media and public relations.

TACTICS

- Design and implement "re-opening" digital marketing campaign with accompanying social media program
- Develop social media calendar to proactively drive website traffic
- Work to engage meeting planners through social media and an expanded e-newsletter subscriber list
- Utilize YouTube and other streaming services to tell the CTCSB story and promote it to groups for convention sales and trade shows
- Aggressively communicate CTCSB wins and economic impact through public relations and communications outreach
- Update "thumb drive" information on a continuing basis for use with meeting planners in designated market segments
- Further engage with LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram, building on our award-winning Instagram success with HelmsBriscoe
- Invest in social media channels to act as a sales lead generator

- Expand “Hospitality Heroes” recognition which recognizes industry-related community service; develop more opportunities to recognize and present awards to local heroes that help CTCSB land major events
- Build upon the already successful CTCSB fundraiser “Bring It Home” Hospitality Industry Night, which acts as a very public thank-you to our clients and continue the involvement of key political leaders in the event
- Consider developing a “Speakers Bureau” of select Board Members to carry the word to service clubs and other organizations

GOAL THREE: CONVENTION SERVICES

Find new ways to attract new business and returning business.

STRATEGY 1

Service the needs of all visiting groups and individuals and provide attendees with a New England Experience that exceeds expectations.

TACTICS

- Reevaluate planner needs in a post-COVID-19 meeting environment, including health and safety concerns for attendees from travel, venue protocols, referrals for medical support, testing and attendee comfort
- Refine lines of communication and how to share information with planners and meeting venues
- Further develop timeline for courses of actions
- Develop volunteer base for events that need this service
- Prepare and disseminate a convention resume to client, local restaurants, host hotels and the meeting venue prior to event
- Visit events as a courtesy and to provide service to the group whenever necessary
- Provide blogs and social media feeds before, during and after events and monitor posts
- Study social media analytics and prepare post-event survey(s) for planners and attendees as requested
- Explore ways to enhance the planner and attendee experience through incentives and giveaways
- Review client’s needs for upcoming events to industry partners
- Share client’s post-event comments with industry partners

STRATEGY 2

Further develop communication to enhance the guest experience.

TACTICS

- Look for opportunities to pre-promote Connecticut to event attendees
- Media outreach and social media promotion before and during event
- Monitor postings for reviews and comments
- Create micro-sites for city-wide events
- Attend awarded conventions to pre-sell the destination to increase attendance when needed
- Provide promotional collateral pre-event and at meeting site
- Create digital “explore Connecticut” discount programs in all regions of the state

- Develop microsite template for each region of the state that interfaces with planner's conference website and/or mobile apps
- Coordinate site inspection of hotels, off-site venues and attractions as needed
- Assist in bid process with members when needed
- Develop pre- and post-meeting itineraries for extended stay
- Develop free time and spousal programs
- Assist with off-site venues
- Expand social media presence between event and restaurants and attractions
- Assist with meeting services, such as transportation, temp services and volunteers

GOAL FOUR: ADVOCACY

Work harmoniously with other organizations involved in state promotion to enable Connecticut and its immediate environment to become a regional, family-oriented, arts, cultural, education, sports, entertainment and meeting destination that will create new jobs and broaden the tourism effort.

STRATEGY I

Publicly support projects that will enhance the experience and attractiveness of the destination.

TACTICS

- Work closely with Destination International on best practices
- Identify the areas in which the Connecticut experience could be improved for meeting, sports and event clients and attendees:
 - Transportation issues to and from Bradley International Airport (BDL) and other regional airports, attractions and lodging
 - Expanded lodging and meeting/convention inventory throughout the state
 - Tournament-grade sports complexes (indoor and outdoor) throughout the state
- Support downtown restaurant and entertainment districts throughout the state
- Support enhanced transportation initiatives throughout the state
- Champion efforts to increase hotel room inventory in major cities

STRATEGY 2

Enhance relationships with elected officials and community leaders.

TACTICS

- Identify and meet with the most influential leaders in the state
- Coordinate the CTCSSB message with other hospitality industry associations
- Provide community leaders with regular reports of the impact of the CTCSSB's sales and marketing efforts
- Request regular board presentations to the city councils in communities that host CTCSSB secured events
- Schedule regular discussions with the Governor, Lt. Governor and State Legislators to keep them updated on CTCSSB's successes
- Be an active participant in State Tourism Day

- Develop a CTCSB Day at the State Capitol separate from State Tourism Day
- Meet with future candidates for the State Legislature before the elections to inform them of the CTCSB's program of work and impact
- Share the rationale behind destination marketing to provide answers for elected officials contending with an uninformed public
- Encourage industry partners to carry the message in their local districts
- Create a partnership with "Downtown Districts" in the state's four largest cities, as well as southeastern Connecticut, to develop a hospitality training program for front-desk personnel, salespeople, waitstaff, etc. and include elected officials to address the trainees so they see the impact on employment
- Direct mail or e-marketing campaign to State departments to invite their industry organization events to Connecticut
- Capitalize on hospitality industry programs along with stakeholder education (Global Meeting Industry Day, Meetings Mean Business, etc.)





SPORTS TOURISM

In concert with the efforts of The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB) to drive more groups and meetings, continue to focus on booking more sports events and maximize each event's potential to draw many thousands of fans.

GOAL ONE: DIRECT SALES

Book more sports events of every size at a full range of venues across the state.

STRATEGY

Sell and market Connecticut as a premier destination for national, regional and statewide sports events — promoting Connecticut as a safe, convenient and accessible destination.

TACTICS

- Position the CTCSB as the expert in the sports industry
- Offer incentives, third-party promotions, direct support and upgraded concessions
- Offer attractive promotional pieces, giveaways and other items for events attendees
- Create an electronic, statewide facilities guide for sports
- Increase marketing with online partners
- Develop a plan to attract new business and retain current business
- Enhance social media visibility
- Conduct media outreach and social media promotion before and during event
- Monitor social media postings for reviews and comments
- Create digital “explore Connecticut” discount programs in all regions of the state



CULTURAL TOURISM

The increased budget allows us to bring significantly more focus to segments of our audience and product offering that have been under-represented in the past. One of these important sectors is our cultural tourism sector. It's time for the Office of Tourism to shine a brighter light on all the specific arts and culture events and experiences, including our visual arts offerings, as well as our performing arts in music, theater, dance and comedy. These efforts will also include promotion of our growing number of live skill and knowledge-expanding experiences like classes, creative demonstrations, forums and talks.

GOAL: RAISE AWARENESS OF OUR ARTS/CULTURE OFFERINGS

Highlight and promote the wide range of arts & culture experiences the state offers.

STRATEGY

Create specific pushes, integrated across multiple tactics, that promote arts and culture experiences including:

- Visual arts exhibits, indoor and outdoor
- Theater
- Dance
- Comedy
- Poetry performance
- Live music, indoor and outdoor, especially festivals
- Recreational classes like chocolate-making, cooking and plein air painting
- Family fun art classes, science demonstrations and special experiences like Faery Village creation
- Literature-related experiences
- Mind-expanding forums and talks

TACTICS

- Focus a more collaborated effort on gathering information about the cultural offerings and calendar of events in the state
- Create a specific "channel" on CTvisit focused on cultural tourism, called CTunplugged
- Pitch PR stories to state and regional outlets
- Engage arts and culture creators as influencers, producing and distributing authentic content that will also be distributed via COT's channels
- Make it easier to find a richer array of cultural events on CTvisit
- Create specific content on CTvisit and distribute via social media, content seeding and SEO/SEM

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

APRIL-JUNE 2022:

- Develop new “channel” on CTvisit and populate with art-and-culture focused experiences
- Include specific experiences in PR pitches
- Partner with the Office of the Arts to promote the Summer at the Museum; identify other key initiatives

JULY-DECEMBER 2022:

- Continually develop content on CTvisit
- Secure editorial story placements around music, theater and museums

EARLY JANUARY-JUNE 2023:

- Continually develop content for the new CTvisit, now with more focus and prominence than ever before
- Secure editorial story placements around arts-and-culture tourism (focus areas TBD)
- Host FAM Tour for arts & culture tourism writers and influencers (April)



LGBTQ+ TOURISM

Connecticut is one of the best states, if not the best state, to live, work and play for those who are LGBTQ+. The state has highly favorable laws, a diversity-celebrating population and so much to do — activities intended to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, as well as just a lot to do in general, welcoming to all. It's time we become well known for it.

GOAL: RAISE AWARENESS AND DRIVE VISITATION

Greatly increase Connecticut's profile as the best state to live, work and play for the LGBTQ+ community.

STRATEGY

Create specific pushes, integrated across multiple tactics, that:

- Target the LGBTQ+ community
- Promote experiences that are LGBTQ+-celebrating
- Encourage patronage of LGBTQ+-owned or focused businesses

TACTICS

- Create a specific “channel” on CTvisit focused on the LGBTQ+ community
- Pitch PR stories to national and regional LGBTQ+ publications and platforms
- Engage LGBTQ+ influencers to create and distribute authentic content, which will also be distributed via COT's channels
- Create specific content on CTvisit and distribute via social media, content seeding and SEO/SEM. Topics will include:
 - Why Connecticut is the best state to live, work and play for the LGBTQ+ community
 - Why Connecticut is the best place for LGBTQ+ medical tourism
 - Pride celebrations — when and where to find them
 - LGBTQ+ things to do

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

APRIL-JUNE 2022:

- Develop new “channel” on CTvisit and populate with LGBTQ+-focused experiences
- Partner with CT LGBTQ+ organizations to identify key focus areas and shape messaging
- Secure editorial story placements around LGBTQ+ tourism/PRIDE

JULY-DECEMBER 2022:

- Continually develop content on CTvisit
- Secure editorial story placements around LGBTQ+ tourism (focus area TBD)
- Host FAM Tour for LGBTQ+-focused writers and influencers (September)
- IGLTA Annual Conference

EARLY JAN-JUNE 2023:

- Continually develop content for the new CTvisit, now with more focus and prominence than ever before
- Secure editorial story placements around LGBTQ+ tourism/PRIDE
- Connect THRIVE Summit



MULTICULTURAL TOURISM

Connecticut offers a wealth of multicultural experiences. It's time we focused on the opportunity to target multicultural travelers and to feature and promote all the diverse offerings of the state, including the wide array of multicultural festivals.

GOAL: RAISE AWARENESS OF MULTICULTURAL TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

Increase Connecticut's profile with multicultural audiences.

STRATEGY

Create specific pushes, integrated across multiple tactics, that:

- Target multicultural audiences
- Promote our rich array of multicultural experiences
- Encourage patronage of minority-owned or minority-focused businesses

TACTICS

- Create a specific "channel" on CTvisit focused on multicultural tourism
- Pitch PR stories to national and regional multicultural publications and platforms
- Engage multicultural influencers to create and distribute authentic content, which will also be distributed via COT's channels
- Create specific content on CTvisit and distribute via social media, content seeding and SEO/SEM

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

MARCH-JUNE 2022:

- Develop a “channel” on CTvisit focused entirely on multicultural tourism
- Develop rich content on a wide array of different cultures covering all the festivals, events and restaurants

JULY-DECEMBER 2022:

- Use content marketing, social media SEM and native content tactics to present this new content to relevant audiences
- Feature multicultural images and experiences in integrated tactics of the tourism campaign
- Host FAM Tour for multicultural/culinary-focused writers and influencers (November)

JANUARY-JUNE 2023:

- Continue continuous digital marketing tactics to engage the relevant audiences





HERITAGE TOURISM

Connecticut is known to have a rich offering for those seeking history and heritage destinations. But our offering is so diverse and extensive, encompassing so much more than the American Revolution, that we want to enhance efforts to inspire the right audiences to seek much more here.

GOAL: INSPIRE ENGAGEMENT

Use our the wide array of history and heritage offerings.

STRATEGY:

- Create specific pushes, integrated across multiple tactics
- Target audiences that show interest in history and heritage offerings
- Promote our rich array of historic and heritage-related experiences.

TACTICS:

- Create a specific “channel” on CTvisit focused on CT History/Heritage
- Partner with history/heritage organizations and attractions
- Create specific content on CTvisit and distribute via social media, content seeding and SEO/SEM

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

MARCH-JUNE 2022:

- Develop partnerships with History/Heritage organizations, attractions and thought leaders

JULY-OCTOBER 2022:

- Develop content, and build image library of historic attractions and heritage offerings
- Design a CT History/Heritage “channel” for the CTvisit homepage, with a single focus, dedicated section of the site
- Use content marketing, social media SEM and native content tactics to present this new content to relevant audiences

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2022:

- Launch new CTvisit now including the CT History/Heritage channel

JANUARY-JUNE 2023:

- Continue continuous digital marketing tactics to engage the relevant audiences



VISITOR SERVICES AND REGIONAL OUTREACH

The Connecticut Office of Tourism connects with industry and regional partners, gathering insights about the current offerings and needs and also manages direct points of interaction with consumers at Welcome Centers and events such as The Big E.

GOAL 1: STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH TOURISM PARTNERS

Sustain and strengthen relations with Connecticut's tourism partners of all kinds.

STRATEGY:

- Create a year-round plan to encourage and engage ongoing communication fostering synergy between all industry sectors.

TACTICS:

- Actively participate in all Regional Tourism District meetings, including subcommittees, board meetings, executive board meetings and marketing meetings.
- Actively participate in CT Association meetings, including CT Restaurants, CT Lodging, CT Merchants, CT Attractions, CT Farm Wineries, COGS, CT Chambers of Commerce, CT Art & Cultural Alliances, etc.
- Conduct outreach/site visits each month to each of the three Regional Tourism Districts.
- Create a virtual "Monday Morning Coffee With COT" session and allow partners to join in for 30-minutes to one-hour session and informally share best practices, ask questions and connect with other tourism partners.
- Highlight and share ways to leverage COT initiatives.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE TOURISM BUSINESSES/EVENTS

Promote tourism businesses and events to incoming travelers, thereby increasing visitation and revenue respectively.

STRATEGY:

- Place staff and enhance visitor services at each of the State Welcome Centers.

TACTICS:

- Recruit, hire and train eligible applicants for hire.
- Engage tourism partners to showcase entities, communities and/or regions.
- Install digital informational kiosks, video wall displays, ability to make reservations.
- Brand each welcome center, creating a sense of place for the visitor who is now in Connecticut.
- Create mini farmers' markets on the welcome center grounds offering a taste of Connecticut
- Offer collateral/promotional materials for the taking.
- Conduct outreach/site visits each month to each of the three Regional Tourism Districts.

- Create a virtual “Monday Morning Coffee With COT” session and allow partners to join in for a 30-minutes to one-hour session and informally share best practices, ask questions and connect with other tourism partners.
- Highlight and share ways to leverage COT initiatives.

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

ONGOING:

- Administer Regional Marketing Program
- Coordinate FAM tours as needed
- Assist with PR/media opportunity partner outreach
- Training of Welcome Center staff

SPRING/HOLIDAY:

- Manage all aspects of the COT presence at the Welcome Centers.

APRIL-JUNE:

- Coordinate Open House Day, second Saturday in June

JUNE-SEPTEMBER

- Plan and administer core aspects of The Big E

FEBRUARY

- Western Connecticut State University Career Fair
- Fairfield University Career Fair
- University of New Haven Career Fair



CONCIERGE SERVICES/DRIVE MARKET

The Office of Tourism directly connects live with consumers, serving to assist them one-on-one in discovering things to do, places to stay and places to eat..

GOAL 1: RAISE AWARENESS.

Generate tourism awareness within the drive-market audiences.

STRATEGY:

Attend in-state and surrounding states' travel and trade shows.

TACTICS:

- Identify in-state consumer shows and regional travel and trade shows to showcase Connecticut tourism.
- Create a dynamic trade show booth display – all-encompassing of tourism sectors.
- Invite tourism partners to attend identified shows with COT.
- Offer practical but fun giveaways and collateral materials for consumers.
- Collect qualified leads generated from each show and share with tourism partners.

GOAL 2: OPTIMIZE STATE'S CONCIERGE SERVICES

Ensure every touchpoint with potential visitors provides a welcoming, positive experience.

STRATEGY:

Develop a more singular voice/personality to share statewide tourism updates.

TACTICS:

- Continue updating weekly "This Weekend Happenings" via 1-800 and 1-888 numbers
- Continue updating Fall Foliage Reports
- Continue updating Ski Condition Reports
- Continue updating Welcome Center staff with tourism highlights and events

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

ONGOING:

- Answer incoming calls for 1-800 hotlines
- Provide condition reports from CT ski areas
- Provide information for What's Happening This Weekend promos
- Provide travel counseling information to incoming drive market visitors
- Provide fulfillment requests as needed
- Staff trade show booth at trade shows as needed



PAID ADVERTISING/DIGITAL MARKETING

The Office of Tourism uses paid advertising to create a brand position, increase awareness and drive visitation to as many businesses as possible in all areas of the state.

COT will use an integrated array of paid advertising tactics to reach an array of target audiences. These tactics include traditional tactics such as TV, out-of-home and radio advertising, as well as digital tactics such as social media, SEM, native content, digital video marketing and online display advertising.

GOAL 1: UPDATE THE BRAND PERCEPTION OF CT

In support of COT's overarching vision and mission, paid advertising will perform a significant role in changing the associations and brand personality of the state

STRATEGY:

Across all tactics and all communication touch points with the Connecticut brand, we will present a new look, feel and energy.

TACTICS:

- Revamp the Connecticut logo. This project will be carefully considered and vetted, so it will take some time.
- In the meantime, we will launch a new, edgier CTvisit brand and will focus more of our advertising on this tourism-centric brand rather than the state brand.
- Change the personality of all advertising touchpoints:
 - Present a younger, edgier, more energetic vibe
 - Show social, ethnic and cultural diversity
 - Highlight surprising and unique experiences
 - Feature more artsy, creative and innovative offerings

GOAL 2: DRIVE REVENUES

Inspire immediate revenues for as many businesses in the industry as possible.

STRATEGY I:

Feature/support as many businesses as possible in advertising.

TACTICS:

- Use CTvisit as the main brand, as well as the call to action of all paid communications.
- Create advertising executions that feature as many different businesses as possible
 - TV/digital video executions will feature multiple experiences of different types
 - OOH will use many different executions, often either rotating or placed in close proximity to others so the viewer will be exposed to many different experiences at one time.
 - Content marketing — distributed through CTvisit, search, social media and native content — will feature many hundreds of different experiences and businesses.
 - CTvisit will feature and highlight many thousands of businesses.

STRATEGY 2:

Spotlight more restaurants and lodging in our marketing.

TACTICS:

- Feature notable and surprising culinary and lodging options in all marketing tactics.
 - Create and promote content that specifically focuses on restaurants and lodging.
 - Increase the prominence of the Restaurant and Lodging categories on CTvisit.
 - Target foodies more specifically
-

STRATEGY 3:

Increase the size and footprint of the audience.

TACTICS:

Increase media spending in:

- Our core geographies
- An expanded drive-market footprint
- Key fly-in markets
- Key international markets

GOAL 3: CONTINUE TO PRESENT CONNECTICUT AS A 4-SEASON DESTINATION

Promote Connecticut's four distinct seasons, each providing unique leisure experiences — and ensure ongoing promotion of those seasons throughout the year.

STRATEGY 1:

Align messages to season. Create season specific campaigns that move from one to the next in an “always on” program.

TACTICS:

- Create an integrated spring/summer campaign from late May-early September.
 - Create an integrated fall campaign from the day after Labor Day to just before Thanksgiving.
 - Create a digital holiday push for Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Christmas, other winter celebrations and New Year's holiday.
 - Create an integrated Winter campaign from early January to the end of March.
 - Support early spring from April 1st through just before Memorial Day with minimal online core presence.
-

STRATEGY 2: ALIGN MESSAGES TO SEASON

Each season brings a different array of seasonal activities. And our competitive strengths vary season to season. So we will create campaigns, perhaps with similar overarching themes, that differ in the season-specific messaging.

TACTICS:

- Launch spring/summer campaign that inspires travel in CT, addresses pent up demand and celebrates the many summer experiences available.
- Launch fall campaign that demonstrates CT has all Fall favorite activities, food and experiences (traditional and unexpected) with a longer season than our neighboring New England states.
- Launch Winter campaign, capitalizing on the momentum of fall, begin rebranding of CT and promote as many winter tourism experiences as possible

EXAMPLES OF NEW CREATIVE CONCEPT PLACEMENTS

BOSTON: NORTH STATION TD GARDEN



CT/FL: BILLBOARDS



NYC: PENN STATION



NYC: LINK



NEW YORK TAXIS



DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

HAMPTON JITNEYS



HAMPTON BUSES



TRAVEL SPONSORSHIPS



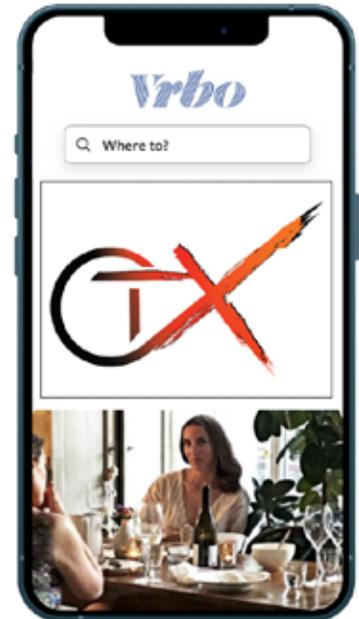
SEM/SOCIAL MEDIA



DATING APPS



STREAMING AUDIO



PROGRAM OF WORK: FY23

JANUARY-APRIL, 2022:

- Develop new CTvisit brand identity
- Conceive and test new, integrated spring/summer campaign concepts
- Determine best creative direction and develop new advertising assets.

LATE MAY-EARLY SEPTEMBER 2022:

- Launch and continually optimize spring/summer campaign
- Conceive and test new, integrated fall campaign concepts
- Determine best fall creative direction and develop new advertising assets.

SEPTEMBER-LATE NOVEMBER 2022:

- Launch and continually optimize fall campaign
- Develop assets for Holiday season promotions

DECEMBER- EARLY JANUARY 2023:

- Conceive new, integrated winter campaign and develop new advertising assets.

EARLY JANUARY-MARCH 2023:

- Launch and continuously optimize the winter campaign
- Conceive and test new, integrated spring/summer campaign concepts

APRIL-MAY 2023:

- Support early spring experiences with online core campaign
- Develop assets for spring/summer integrated campaign

LATE MAY-EARLY SEPTEMBER 2023:

- Launch and continuously optimize the spring/summer



PR/SOCIAL MEDIA/INFLUENCER MARKETING

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Connecticut Office of Tourism's Communications team manages public relations, media and events with the ultimate goal of increasing leisure and business travel to the state. The team works closely with national, regional and local media and attends key industry events to secure positive coverage about Connecticut, thus generating greater awareness for, and interest in, the state's tourism offerings among key audiences.

GOAL 1: PREMIER TRAVEL DESTINATION

Establish Connecticut as a premier U.S. travel destination with a distinct personality/mystique by broadening perceptions of what it offers, including a vibrant arts and culture scene, through editorial story placements and events.

STRATEGY 1:

Secure editorial story placements in a wide range of national, regional and local lifestyle, travel, arts/entertainment and food/beverage media, including print, online/blogs and broadcast outlets, via press activities including tailored pitching and Familiarization Tours (FAMs).

TACTICS:

- Uncover, package and promote new and unique story angles about Connecticut's tourism offerings to augment seasonal pitching efforts and reach new and diverse audiences
- Host individual/one-on-one FAMs for highly selective national/regional travel media
- Host specially themed FAMs aligned to new/unique story angles, providing attendees in-depth and behind-the-scenes experiences, custom collateral and swag
- Leverage existing media relationships and earned partnerships with Connecticut media properties to further promote the state as a prime "staycation" destination to residents
- Secure and coordinate media interviews (in person or virtual) for key spokesperson(s)
- Respond to incoming requests for information/collateral

STRATEGY 2:

Capture the attention and become a valuable source for some of the most influential lifestyle/travel media in the country, providing new opportunities to pitch short- and long-term editorial stories.

TACTICS:

- Host an exclusive media reception in New York City featuring some of the Connecticut tourism industry's most prominent and up-and-coming personalities (e.g., hoteliers, chefs, musicians, etc.) with the goal of securing editorial stories
- Attend high-profile trade shows to establish and/or strengthen relationships with key media in the region and across the country
- Coordinate desk-side briefings (in person or virtual) for key Connecticut tourism representatives and ambassadors

GOAL 2: REVENUE AND VISITATION

Drive visitation and revenues to Connecticut tourism businesses and events of all types and sizes across the state.

STRATEGY:

Feature Connecticut tourism businesses/events in editorial story pitches to increase awareness among existing and new audiences.

TACTICS:

- Develop detailed editorial calendar that establishes story ideas, timing and audiences for editorial news stories throughout the year
- Collect news, story ideas and collateral, including images, from Connecticut tourism businesses via industry emails/portal, to incorporate into pitching efforts
- Present media opportunities to businesses/events as they arise
- Develop Speakers Bureau of tourism business owners/managers who can quickly respond to relevant media requests

GOAL 3: AWARENESS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT

Generate awareness for the economic impact of Connecticut's tourism industry among key audiences/stakeholders.

STRATEGY:

Utilize proprietary research and economic data to create pitches/story angles highlighting the importance of the industry to the local economy.

TACTICS:

- Produce and/or aggregate research and data to share with key audiences/stakeholders
- Utilize key messages and media talking points to highlight the importance of the tourism industry to Connecticut's economy
- Develop speaker's bureau of tourism industry leaders, including associations, who can quickly respond to relevant media requests



GOAL 4: PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen relationships with tourism industry partners across the state to maximize resources and optimize outcomes. Partners include, but are not limited to, other state agencies, municipalities, individual tourism businesses and events, tourism marketing organizations and industry organizations and associations.

STRATEGY:

Identify opportunities to collaborate on promotions and external communications, expanding access to new and unique audiences.

TACTICS:

- Establish or strengthen relationships through regular check-ins and meetings
- Align pitching efforts with key activities and programs within tourism industry subsectors
- Identify opportunities to participate in/co-present at key industry events
- Leverage consumer/industry events as brand activation opportunities



PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

JULY 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Summer Highlights
- **THEME:** Music (Festivals)
- **THEME:** Culinary

AUGUST 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Fall/Foliage Preview
- **8/1-15:** **THEME:** Multicultural & Heritage (Festivals)
- **8/15-31:** **THEME:** Nightlife

SEPTEMBER 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Fall/Foliage Highlights
- **9/1-15:** **THEME:** Arts & Culture (Museums/Exhibits)
- **9/15-10/15:** **THEME:** Multicultural & Heritage (Hispanic Heritage Month)
- **9/16-10/2:** The Big E—Connecticut Building
- **TBD:** FAM: LGBTQ+

OCTOBER 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Fall/Foliage Highlights
- **9/15-10/15:** **THEME:** Multicultural & Heritage (Hispanic Heritage Month)
- **9/16-10/2:** The Big E—Connecticut Building Support
- **THEME:** Arts & Culture (Theater)
- IGLTA Annual Conference/Milan, Italy
- **TBD:** NYC Media Reception

NOVEMBER 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Holiday Preview
- **11/1-31:** **THEME:** Music
- **TBD:** FAM: Culinary + Multicultural

DECEMBER 2022:

- **Ongoing:** Holiday Highlights
- **THEME:** LGBTQ+

JANUARY 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Winter Highlights
- **1/1-31:** **THEME:** Meetings, Conventions & Sports
- **1/25-26:** IMM North America/New York, NY
- **1/28-29:** New York Travel & Adventure Show/ New York, NY

FEBRUARY 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Winter Highlights
- **2/1-28:** **THEME:** Culinary
- **2/1-28:** **THEME:** Multicultural & Heritage (Black History Month)

MARCH 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Spring Preview
- **THEME:** Arts & Culture (TBD)

APRIL 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Summer Preview
- **4/1-30:** **THEME:** Outdoor Adventure
- **4/22:** **THEME:** Sustainability (Earth Day)
- **TBD:** FAM: Arts & Culture

MAY 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Summer Highlights
- **5/1-31:** **THEME:** Multicultural & Heritage (TBD)

JUNE 2023:

- **Ongoing:** Summer Highlights
- **6/1-30:** **THEME:** LGBTQ+ (Pride)
- **6/10:** Connecticut Open House Day

SOCIAL MEDIA

The office of tourism manages a robust social media program, with ongoing support of many platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok.

The continuous, year-round social media posting calendar includes support of marketing campaigns, PR hits, partner and industry news, influencer content distribution and other relevant industry content and connection.

GOAL

Inspire interest in visiting Connecticut and drive visitation of both CTvisit and the state, while supporting the new brand position and personality.

STRATEGY 1:

Spotlight Connecticut's attractions with energetic, contemporary images to shift the perception of the state from stodgy to vibrant.

TACTICS:

- Utilize UGC photography across all marketing materials
 - Invite followers to share their images with us for a chance to be featured
 - Highlight users in the social post for authenticity as well as to drive interest and increase engagement
-

STRATEGY 2:

Drive traffic to CTvisit using test and learn strategy to determine most compelling and efficient post content.

TACTICS:

- Post prompts for a mix of top-performing content and new content, all driving to CTvisit
 - Share appropriate partner news
 - Create posts in support of marketing campaigns
 - Create posts touting unexpected and exciting experiences
 - Identify new ad formats on the top social platforms for testing
 - Partner with influencers to share branded content to their audiences as part of the program agreement
 - Create a media kit for each partnership for quick and easy activation
 - Develop topic-specific newsletter sign-up for increased engagement, retargeting and lookalike audiences
 - Test out new markets, specifically fly-in markets, to drive visitation
-

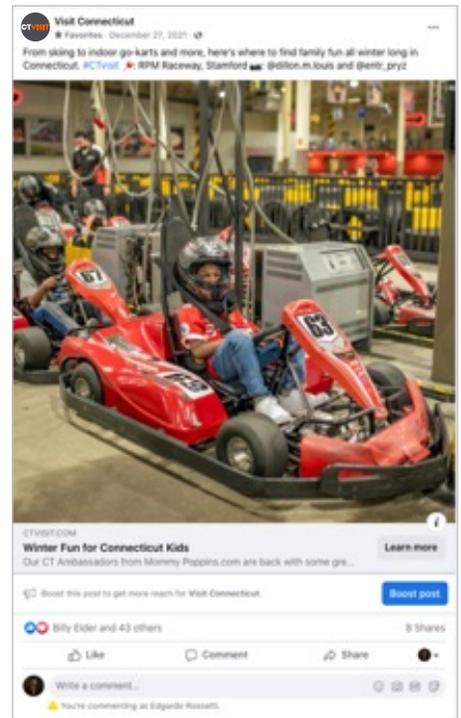
STRATEGY 3:

Showcase Connecticut's vibrant communities and their culture by partnering and developing content with various targeted consumer segments, including African American, Hispanic and LGBTQ.

TACTICS:

- Develop evergreen content that showcases year-round inclusion for all residents and travelers — not just on community specific holidays and observances
- Balance promotion between English- and Spanish-speaking travelers
- Highlight Connecticut's accessibility to all travelers

CREATIVE EXAMPLES



PROGRAM OF WORK: FY23

ONGOING/ALWAYS-ON

- Spring/summer campaigns 2022-2023
- Fall campaigns 2022-2023
- Winter campaigns 2022-2023



INFLUENCER MARKETING

The Office of Tourism maintains a robust influencer marketing program, creating and building ongoing relationships with influencers with authentic credibility in specific aspects of the state's tourism offerings.

The right influencer partnerships add great value to expand and enhance marketing. Great influencers help build trust and credibility for the brand while delivering outstanding ROI. FY23 partners for Connecticut Tourism may be identified using a blend of data and relevance, as well as careful evaluation of the benefits and risks of each. Efforts will ultimately expand reach to new and complementary audiences and drive greater interest in living, working and playing in Connecticut.

Target audience is consistent with integrated marketing efforts of social media, advertising and PR.

GOAL: BUILD BRAND RELEVANCE AND INSPIRE VISITATION

Engage the authentic voices of an array of micro and nano influencers from the state and the region to create interest in visiting the state

STRATEGY I

Introduce new audiences to Connecticut by investing in and growing relationships with influencers as business constituents of the state.

TACTICS

- Analyze Connecticut Tourism audience gaps to target efforts at attracting the right Influencer audiences for FY23
- Evaluate effectiveness of Connecticut influencers by comparing results to benchmarks on measures including reach, engagement, awareness growth, sentiment change and — when possible — actual visitation
- Identify new influencers by measuring key points such as their offering, geographic reach, audience demographics, network potential and capacity
- Vet new influencers using a 10-point evaluation that includes past collaborations, affinities, social chatter, brand sentiment and competitive tensions
- Manage influencer contracts and oversee execution of the agreements. Mutually agreed-upon deliverables are clearly defined in each contract, with duration, service descriptions, tactics, distribution plan and expectations outlined
- Nurture influencer relationships to encourage exceptional execution of deliverables and continued support for Connecticut Tourism goals

STRATEGY 2

Drive traffic to Connecticut's owned platforms (social, web, email) through influencer content to nurture relationships with target audiences.

TACTICS

- Create program themes and select influencers that align with each theme:
 - CT Unplugged
 - CT Together
 - CT Savor
 - CT Wellness
 - CT Outdoor
 - CT Innovation
 - CT Family Friendly
 - Work with influencers to identify the top-performing formats for their audiences and develop assignments based on those insights. Diversifying formats will attract audiences in an authentic and receptive environment.
 - Provide a call-to-action from Influencer content across social channels to drive traffic to desired click-through destinations.
 - Optimize SEO through storytelling from influencers. Develop written content as needed to support objectives and feed the demands of audiences across channels and the CTvisit website.
 - Repurpose content to maximize opportunities to reach and engage new audiences.
-

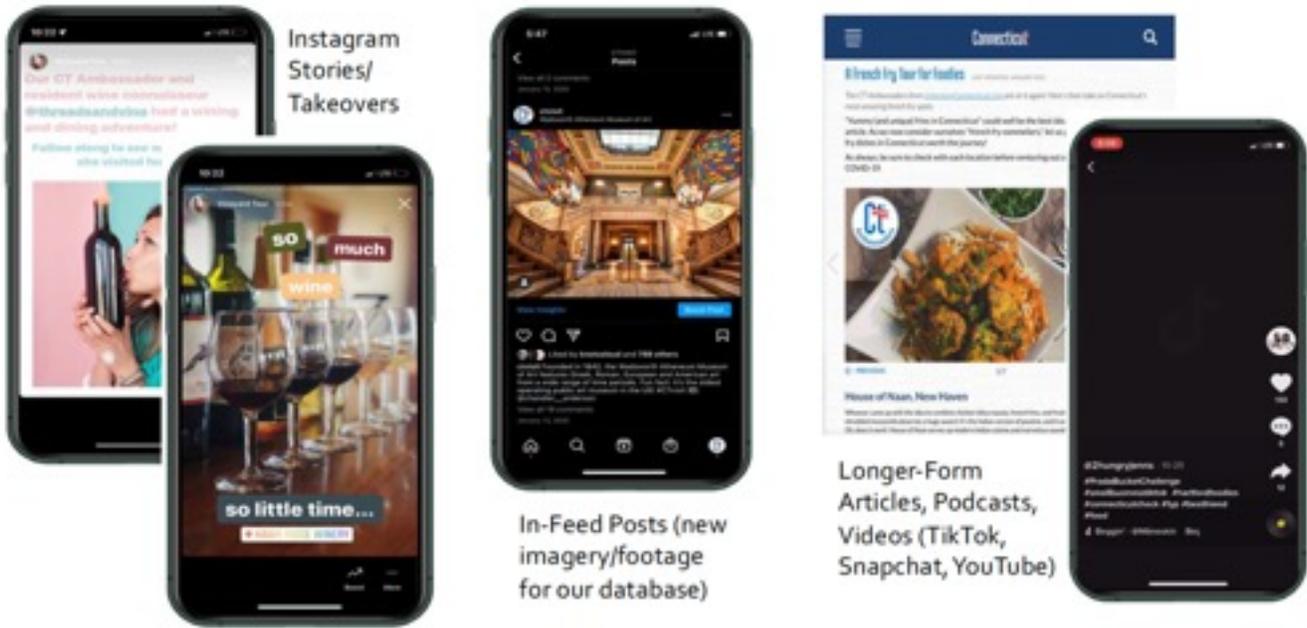
STRATEGY 3

Collect authentic imagery and visual experiences from influencers for use in evergreen OOH, social, digital and content marketing efforts for Connecticut Tourism.

TACTICS

- Collect imagery from influencers in highest quality possible. This includes video, photography, graphics and story assets as outlined in the influencers contract agreements and by assignment. Additional imagery may be collected from UGC content with consent of the creator
- Identify, label, code and store valued video and photography assets within the Connecticut DAM system. Images should be easily and relevantly searchable, with sourcing details as required by contributor

CREATIVE EXAMPLES



PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

Influencer marketing for Connecticut Tourism is “always on.” Continue FY 2022-2023 integrated efforts across marketing areas to ramp up when needed and ensure seasonal relevance and alignment with integrated themes.

SEASONAL ALIGNMENT

- Spring/summer campaigns 2022-2023
- Fall campaigns 2022-2023
- Winter campaigns 2022-2023

INFLUENCER PRESENCE AT CONNECTICUT EVENTS

- CT Air Show
- Tourism conference
- Cultural holidays: Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month



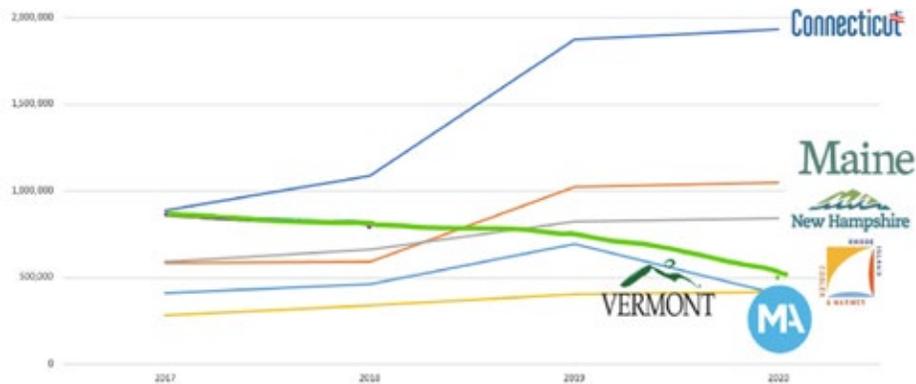
CONTENT AND WEBSITE

The Office of Tourism administers CTvisit.com and manages all aspects of every form of content on the site including:

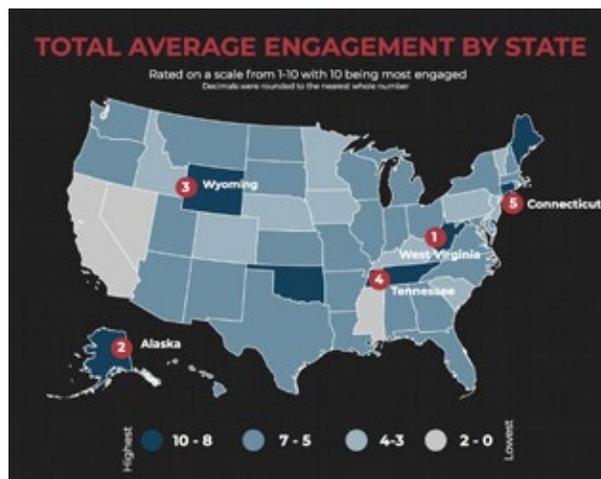
- Ensuring site content integrity by upholding guidelines for all listings and content
- Creating, updating and encouraging partner participation in the creation of listings, events and deals
- Continually updating the article content on the site, including over 500 unique content stories
- Managing new content development, publishing and tagging
- Promoting top performing, most relevant content in a variety of key locations on the site
- Preparing the site to reflect seasonal shifts
- Compiling “This Weekend” highlights every week of the year, the single most visited page of the site

CTvisit.com is the hub of Connecticut Tourism's marketing communications. The site receives seven million visits per year, significantly more than any other state in the region.

In fact, according to third-party tracking site, SEMrush, with among the smallest budgets and the smallest budget per capita, Connecticut has dwarfed even our largest regional competitors.



And even more impressively, according to a third-party tracking platform, TwoSix Digital, Connecticut's tourism site has among the highest engagements in the nation, punching well above our weight against even large, well-funded states known for tourism.



TIME FOR IMPROVEMENT

Our site was designed over seven years ago — an eternity in technology-years. Consumers' changing needs and expectations along with advancements in technology contribute to an immediate need to update the site. We need to find ways to continue driving the significant traffic we have been — while continuing to optimize the site.

Furthermore, the CMS platform requires an essential update that will involve complicated development. Now is the perfect time for a major update to CTvisit.

GOAL: STAY ON TOP

Improve upon what's working, creating a next-level site to provide consumers and listing partners a better, more inspiring experience that leapfrogs other state tourism sites, continuing our lead in the industry.

STRATEGY I:

Update the brand immediately. With our new brand direction and campaigns that are younger, edgier, more diverse and more inclusive driving traffic to CTvisit, it feels like a disconnect to find the patriotic colors, stars and flags of the current site. So even while we are working on the major redesign of the site, we will get a quick brand facelift in place more quickly.

TACTICS:

- Since we cannot change the whole state's brand guidelines this quickly, we will rebrand the website under a CTvisit brand. This will give us permission to create a whole new energy and vibe, without disrupting the Connecticut state brand.
- The Connecticut brand's red, white and blue color palette will be replaced with a more modern, edgy and energetic color palette.
- The energy of the page will change completely with simple changes to imagery, color and design elements, so that the first impression of the site is more in line with the new energy of the campaigns.
- The Connecticut logo at the top of the page will be replaced with a new CTvisit logo.
- The regional pages will also each get tailored versions of the CTvisit logo for the tourism regional districts.
- And to help bring more presence to the important areas of focus discussed in this document, the homepage will now feature promotion of each.
- This "interim" site will launch in spring of 2022.

STRATEGY 2:

Discover, plan, design and develop a new CTvisit that inspires consumers to experience more in Connecticut.

TACTICS:

- Conduct research via over 1,000 survey completes with consumers to discover what they like, and what could be better.
 - Gather and analyze Google Analytics data to learn how traffic behaves, what is popular and what should be improved.
 - Study the best of the rest of the nation's other state tourism sites, glean best practices.
 - Take inspiration from other tourism and outstanding consumer experiences on sites around the world.
 - Research the latest tools, APIs and best practices.
 - Synthesize and prioritize a desired list of changes, shaping the scope of the project to fit within the budget.
 - Design an updated vision and vet it with stakeholders and consumers.
 - Build and test the new site.
 - Launch the new site in the fall of 2022.
-

STRATEGY 3:

Make CTvisit better for partners. We won't just make the new CTvisit better for consumers. We want to make it easier to use, easier to keep seasonally updated and more informative for partners.

TACTICS:

- Conduct research via meetings with stakeholders and surveys of thousands of industry partners about how to make the site more useful and the CMS interface more intuitive.
- Also probe for challenges in keeping the site updated for seasons and events.
- And also ask about use of the Partner Portal, looking for ways to make it more valuable.
- Synthesize findings from research.
- Develop and prioritize desired changes.
- Create a scope of work that fits within the budget.
- Design, develop and launch the new CTvisit site in the late fall.

PROGRAM OF WORK

JANUARY-APRIL 2022

- Develop new CTvisit brand identity and interim website design
- Build interim website
- Launch interim website
- Conduct all research with consumers and industry partners
- Synthesize findings
- Determine scope of work for the new site update
- Begin design process

MAY-JUNE 2022

- Finalize designs of the new site and begin development

JULY-AUGUST 2022

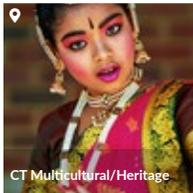
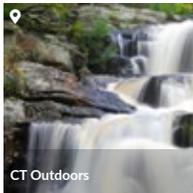
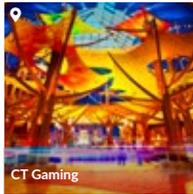
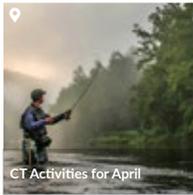
- Continue development for the new site
- Update database and content as needed
- Manage new imagery and content uploads

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2022

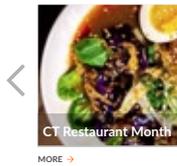
- Finalize development of the new site
- Test the new site for QA
- Share the site in near-final form with industry partners

FALL 2022:

- Launch the new site



EXCLUSIVE EVENTS



Connecticut

Connecticut Office of Tourism
450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 5
Hartford, CT 06103
Travel planning assistance (US/Canada)
888-CT-Visit (288-4748)
[Email us](#)

Contact Us
Climate
Groups, Meetings
and Conferences

Resources
and Links
Press Room

Privacy Policy
Disclaimers

Report a Problem
Sitemap

SELECT LANGUAGE

Copyright ©2022 Connecticut Office of Tourism



Contact Info

E-Newsletter Sign Up

Groups/Meetings

Tourism Partners



ANALYTICS AND RESEARCH

The Connecticut Office of Tourism tracks many sources of data and manages proprietary research, in order to help inform the programs and strategies and to help keep the industry informed. These sources include, but are not limited to:

- **Economic Impact** studies for Connecticut from Tourism Economics, Inc. This valuable study is conducted every other year. The most recent study should have been in FY2021, but due to the pandemic was postponed. We will resume this study in FY2023.
- **Smith Travel Research** reports, monthly.
- **Google Analytics** of CTvisit for traffic, media tactic performance, consumer behavioral and interest insights, as well as leads to partner organizations.
- An annual **Brand Attitudes and Awareness** study, now in its 11th year.
- Third-party studies that COT is able to acquire.

ECONOMIC IMPACT:

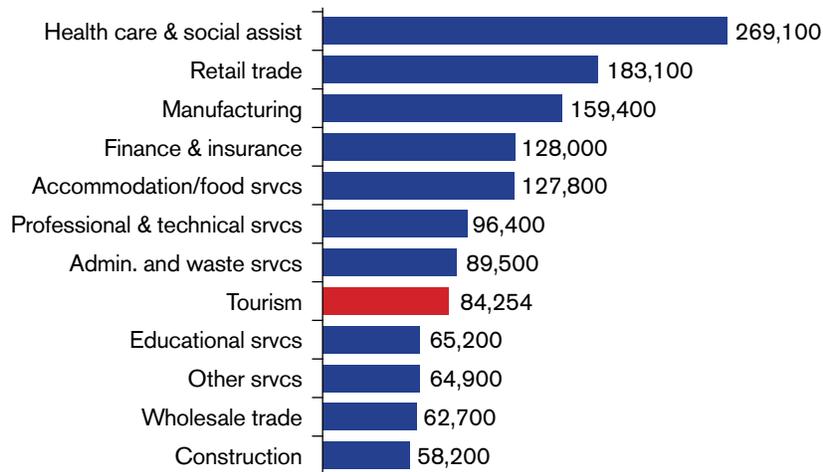
We typically conduct this study every other year. The most recent study should have been in FY2020, but due to the pandemic was postponed. We will resume this study in FY2023. The following information is from the most recent study, gathered after the close of calendar 2017 and reported in 2019.

Although many residents of Connecticut may not think of their state as a tourist destination, tourism is big business. It's the state's 8th largest industry and supports 5.3% of all jobs.

- The tourism industry, which impacts lodging, restaurants, transportation, retail and recreation businesses, among others, employs one out of every 19 residents in Connecticut.
- Visitor spending directly supported \$4.6 billion in state GDP in 2017, the last year measured.
- 99% of the state's lodging, 34% of the recreation and 17% of our food and beverage employment is supported by visitor spending.

Without the \$960 million in state and local taxes generated by visitor activity, each and every household in the state would have to pay \$705 more in taxes to maintain the current level of government.

EMPLOYMENT IN CONNECTICUT





\$ 15.5 BILLION
in sales supported by traveler spending



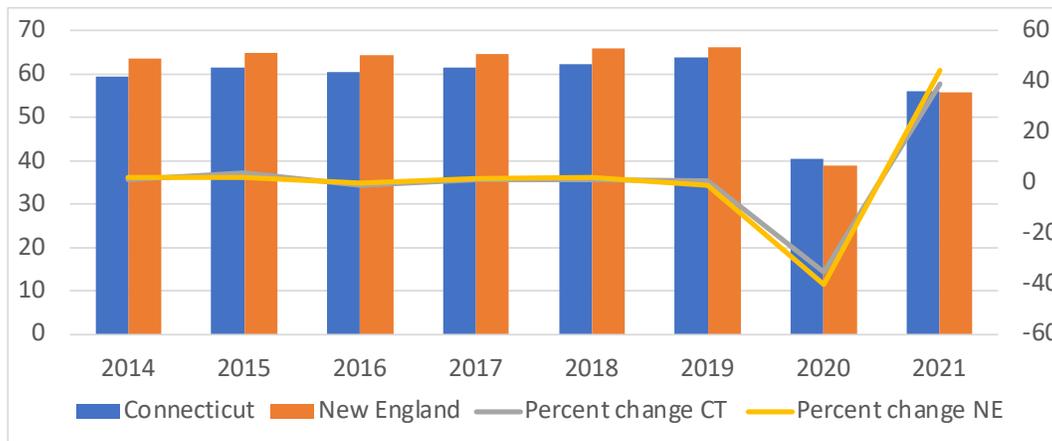
\$ 2.2 BILLION
in tax revenues, including \$960 million in state/local and \$1.2 billion in federal tax generated by visitor activity



84,254 JOBS
directly related to tourism and 123,531 jobs supported by tourism activities

SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH REPORTS

Room occupancy has rebounded from the 2020 lows. 2021 saw occupancy levels up 38.9% over 2020, which was down 35.5% compared to 2019.

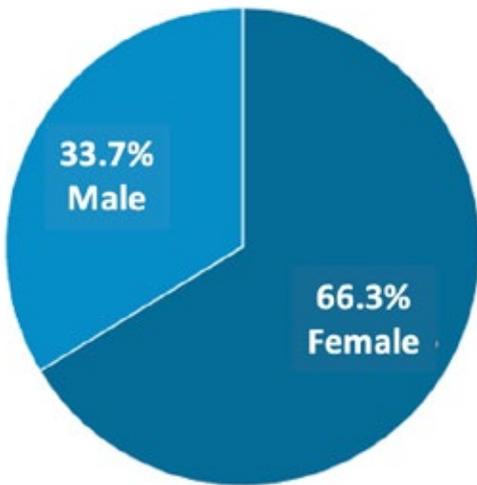


SHORT-TERM RENTAL REPORTS

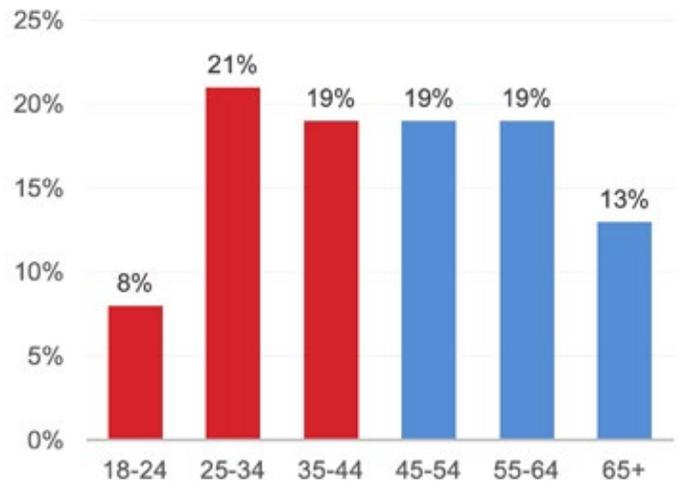
We are actively pursuing a contract with a short term rental data reporting service. We look forward to being able to report data in this important sector of the market.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS FOR CTVISIT

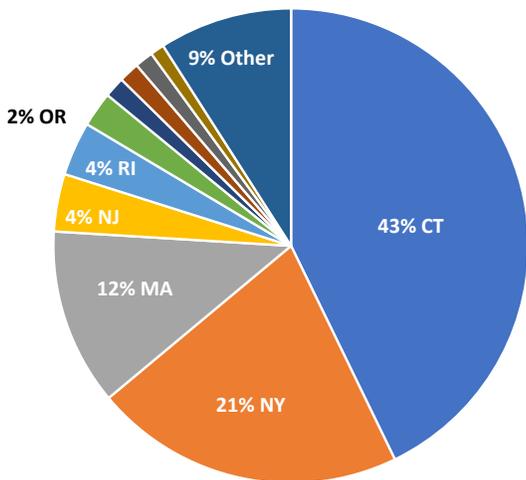
Google Analytics provides data on the performance of CTvisit that we use to gather insights about how the site is performing, who the customer is, what they are interested in and where on the site they go. Here are some highlights from 2021:



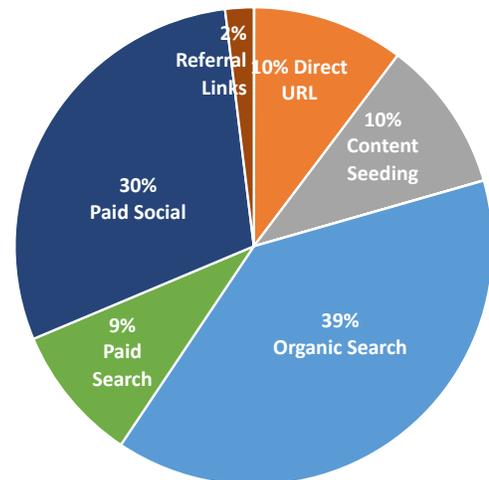
Two-thirds of our site visitors are female



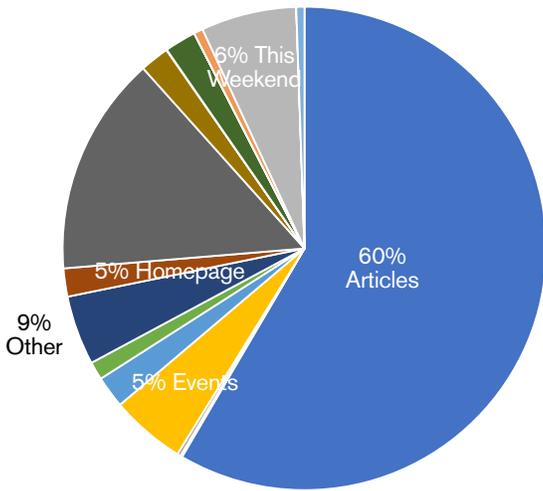
We attract a relatively **balanced mix** across our target age groups; nearly 50% are under age 44.



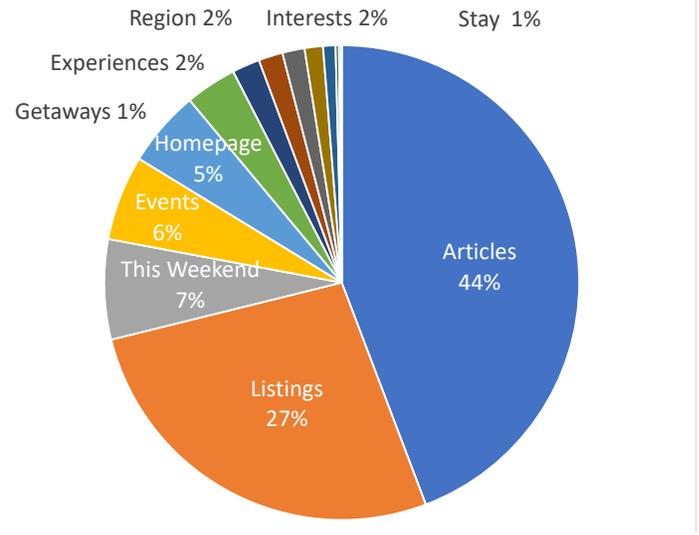
The majority of all site visitors are from **CT, NY and MA**.



The site attracts **7 million visits a year**. In 2019 and 2021, traffic was driven from the above sources. After organic search, paid social is the largest generator of traffic.



60% of visitors enter the site through an article.



44% of leads to listed partners originated through an article.

10TH ANNUAL BRAND ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS STUDY

Each year for the last decade, COT has been conducting a Brand Attitudes and Awareness study. The study uses a consistent survey to consumers in the Northeast to determine the longterm changes in attitudes and awareness and the impact that marketing has on them.

VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Visitors in 2021 had a comparatively high household income and were younger but visited a bit less often than the prior year.

Those who visited in 2021 were closer in income and age to the overall target market than pre-pandemic visitors and somewhat more ethnically diverse.

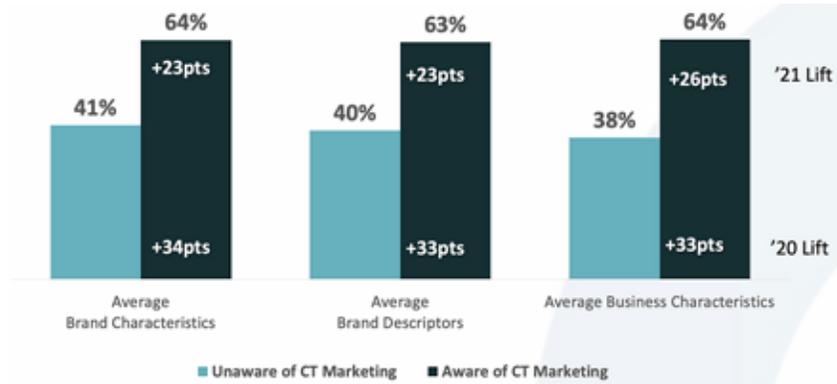
Similar trends have been noted across travelers nationwide.

Category	2021 Visitors	2020 Visitors	Target Market Travelers
Household Income	\$133.3k	\$137.4k	\$135.2k
Age of Respondent	41.0	47.7	40.6
25-34	32%	15%	27%
35-44	33%	50%	43%
55-64	35%	36%	30%
Interest in Visiting Next 2 Years	70%	72%	54%
Intent to Visit Next 12 Months	78%	87%	47%
Number of Visits Past 5 Years	4.1	6.8	3.0
White, Non-Hispanic	84%	87%	78%
Black, Non-Hispanic	2.6%	3.4%	6.8%
Hispanic	7.9%	4.1%	7.8%
Asian	7.2%	4.7%	5.9%
Other	2.0%	4.1%	4.3%

CONNECTICUT BRAND RATINGS

Connecticut continues to earn high ratings among the brand characteristics, descriptors and business characteristics evaluated. Likewise, the state's marketing efforts continue to have a positive impact on Connecticut's brand perceptions.

Over the years, Connecticut's marketing efforts have created a lift in the perceptions of travelers. Even in 2021, as travelers began venturing out farther, those who saw marketing from Connecticut had a significantly higher perception of the state than those who didn't see marketing. The lift in 2021 remained much higher across all brand measurements than Connecticut has typically seen in the past.

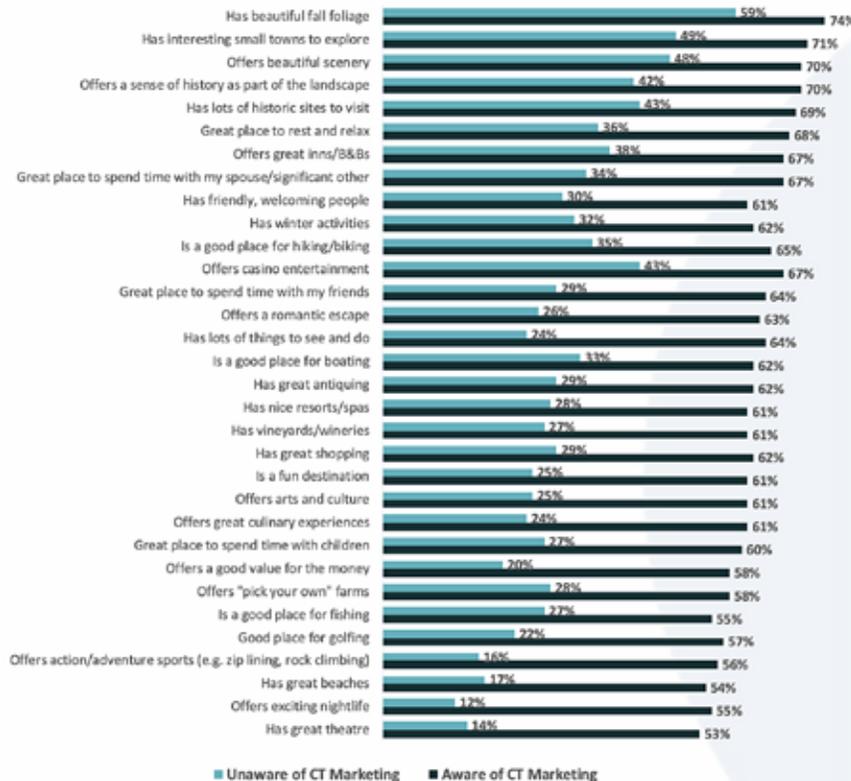


BRAND CHARACTERISTICS:

Connecticut's marketing has a significant impact on how travelers view the state.

Those who are marketing aware rate the state an average of 32 points higher than those who did not see any of the marketing.

The biggest variance comes in the area of believing Connecticut offers exciting nightlife (42 points between marketing aware vs unaware.)



AIDED BRAND AWARENESS

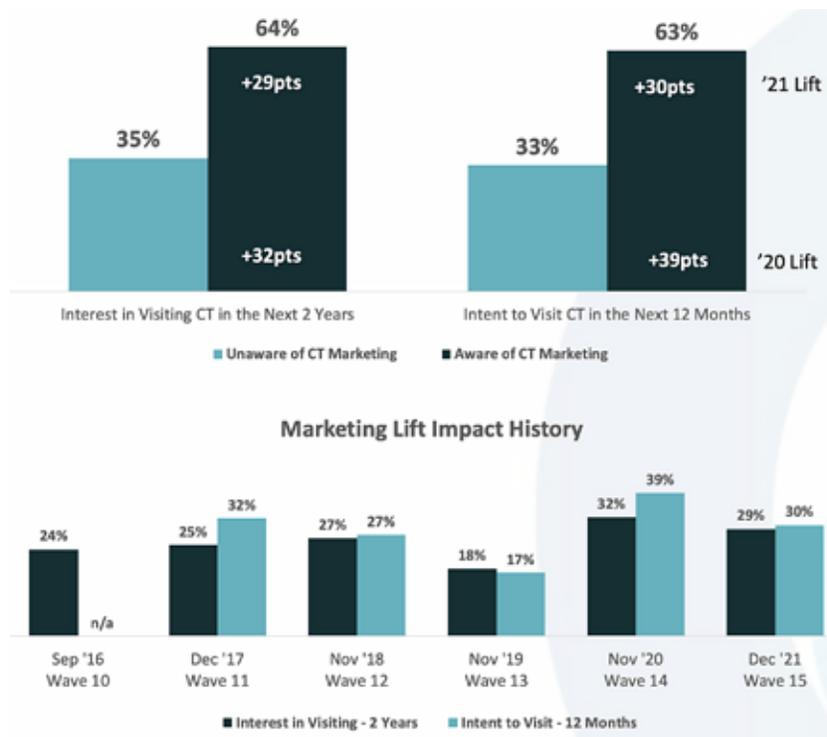
Although the pandemic negatively impacted the brand awareness of all of Connecticut's competitive set, Connecticut continues to lag behind the competitors.



INTEREST AND INTENT TO VISIT

Connecticut's marketing efforts have not only impacted traveler perceptions of the state as a travel destination but have also increased both interest and intent to visit.

In 2021, travelers who had seen Connecticut advertising were 29 points more likely to be interested in visiting than those who hadn't seen ads. Similarly, those who had seen advertising were 30 points more likely to visit Connecticut in the next 12 months.





MEMBERSHIPS, CONTRACTS AND FINANCIALS

The Connecticut Office of Tourism's administrative office ensures that all of the office's operations are carefully budgeted and efficiently managed. In addition, it oversees all of the department's regional, national and international memberships in leading trade associations and industry organizations.

GOAL: RAISE VISIBILITY OF CONNECTICUT

Increase Connecticut's positioning as a world-class destination.

STRATEGY:

Become an active member of a number of key travel/tourism/destination associations.

- Leverage these memberships to network with key travel/tourism influencers and media outlets.
- Capitalize on the learning opportunities offered through these organizations to stay up to date on the latest sales/marketing trends in the tourism industry.

TACTICS:

Maximize the benefits of memberships in all of the following organizations:

- ABA
- US Travel Association
- NTA
- Brand USA
- Destinations International
- IGLTA
- Discover New England
- Conference Direct
- CT Business & Industry Association
- CT Restaurant Association
- CT Lodging Association
- Events Services Professional Association
- HelmsBriscoe
- Live Events Coalition
- Meeting Professional International
- New England Society of Convention & Visitor Bureaus
- Northeast Convention and Visitor Bureau
- New York Society of Association Executives
- Professional Convention Management Association
- Sports Event and Tourism Association



TOURISM INDUSTRY EVENTS AND SUMMITS: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The State of Connecticut's Tourism Director will be in attendance at the following industry events and summits:

PROGRAM OF WORK: FY22-23

APRIL 2022:

- **4/2-4/6:** Destination International, CEO Summit

JULY-AUGUST 2022:

- **7/19-7/22:** Destination International Annual Conference
- **8/6-8/9:** US Travel Association

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022:

- **9/26-10/2:** Brand USA Travel Week

NOVEMBER 2022:

- **11/7-11/13:** World Travel Market (WTM)

JANUARY 2023:

- **1/20-1/24:** New York Travel and Adventure Show

MARCH-JUNE 2023:

- **March:** Outdoor Adventure Travel Show
- **May:** Discover New England Annual Summit

TBA:

- Philadelphia Travel & Adventure Show
- National Council of State Tourism

CTVISIT

CONNECTICUT'S OFFICIAL TOURISM SITE

Connecticut Office of Tourism
450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 5
Hartford, CT 06103

www.CTvisit.com

Connecticut[®]